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CANADIAN CHURCH NEWS NOTES

The following is the latest installment of the CANADA CHURCH NEWS NOTES, designed especially for those interested in religious news pertaining to Canada. It is written by Vince Londini (vlondini@bethelbaptist.ca), Bethel Baptist Church, London, Ontario, and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service (FBIS). For instructions on how to unsubscribe to the FBIS or to change mailing addresses, please consult the information paragraph at the end.

January 5, 2004

CANADIAN FORCES FIRST MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

According to the *Toronto Star*, on December 10, 2003, the Canadian Forces chaplaincy welcomed its first Muslim cleric. Although only 200 of the nearly 60,000 Canadian Forces personnel identify with Islam, the Canadian military decided to demonstrate diversity. A Roman Catholic priest heads the Canadian Forces chaplaincy. To welcome the new Muslim chaplain, the chaplaincy regimental song "Onward Christian Soldiers" was replaced by Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

Why did the Canadian Forces appoint a Muslim chaplain? To fundamental Christians, such a move may seem incomprehensible. No doubt the questions that might be asked include, "Does the chaplaincy see Islam as compatible with the 'Christian' faiths currently represented in its ranks?" "Do the chaplains who will co-minister with the Muslim cleric accept the Qur'an as equally authoritative as the Bible?" "Will the chaplaincy warn people that Islam is not the true way to Heaven?"

To understand the chaplaincy's move, one must understand the deeply secular influence on modern religious thinking that motivates much modern "inter-faith" co-operation.

Evolutionary theory, as applied to religion and propagated by most universities and media outlets, supposes that humans invent religions to meet their social and psychological needs in an attempt to understand and cope with the vast universe around them. This evolutionary view teaches that all religion evolve over the course of human history and share common concepts.

However, this viewpoint denies the existence of the God of the Bible. It refuses to believe that He has intervened in human affairs. It denies that He gave the Bible to mankind as His perfect, infallible, preserved Word. Instead, such a mindset regards claims of God's miracles as mythical explanations, which "intelligent" people should reject while finding the true (naturalistic) explanation. Thus, this view leads to rank denial of the God of the Bible, refusal to acknowledge His creative acts, rejection of any concept that man is

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sinful and under the wrath of the Holy God, and disbelief in Jesus Christ’s deity, virgin birth, resurrection, and role as sole-redeemer of mankind.

Instead, modern secularism insists that all “scriptures” from all religions are equally “inspired” and equally valid viewpoints from which one may construct a personal theology. The natural outgrowth of this view is the philosophy, “it doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as it works for you.” Following this reasoning, modern secularism seems to insist on only one rule for religion: Never believe that yours is the only, exclusive truth (i.e. “Don’t tell me that your way is the only way to Heaven”). If you agree to that, you will also agree that there is no point in attempting to convert people to your beliefs, and no reason to deny or object to other religious traditions.

Because this secular view of religion prevails in our Western cultures, even religious people seem to believe that “all religions are equal” and “my way is as good as any way.” Most people we encounter with the Gospel have embraced some level of this philosophy. They seem uninterested and quickly dismiss our assertions that Christ’s sacrifice is the only means by which sins are forgiven.

But praise God, that through His Word, His convicting Spirit, and Prayer these strongholds of darkness and ignorance can be overcome in the minds of precious souls! May God strengthen us to the work of reaching the lost in this post-modern age and work through us to see souls forsake this false, secular world-view and come to Christ!

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL, CATHOLIC-PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CANADA

The Catholic Church could be expected to be predominant in French-speaking areas such as Quebec. But in Ontario, the Roman Catholic Church has a long-established school system that successfully competes with the secular-public schools. While this may be the accepted norm in Ontario, or a common practice in other countries, these facts may surprise most Americans.

Taxpayers in Ontario designate whether their share of school-taxes will go to support the secular or the Catholic system. The two systems have separate school boards, elected by those who correspondingly designated their taxes. Naturally, no strings-free provision exists for Biblical Christians to invest their tax money into home-schooling, or church-schooling their children.

In London, Ontario, the largest, nicest, newest schools are the Catholic secondary schools; which now draw more students than the public system, because of their amenities, teacher quality, and standardized test score superiority. In some areas, the secular and Catholic secondary schools share a gymnasium, which is all that physically separates the two schools.

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